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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
 Agricultural Research Service  
 Plant Quarantine Branch  
 209 River St., Hoboken, N. J.



RESPONSIBILITIES OF PLANT IMPORTERS

1. To avoid delay in the handling of their shipments of propagating material importers have four important responsibilities to assume. Failure to assume these may result in loss or deterioration of material.

These responsibilities are:

- a. To see to it, before placing orders, that their permits make specific provisions for the entry of the material or that they have written assurance from the Import and Permit Unit, 209 River Street, Hoboken, N. J., that they may import the material they propose to order under their permit.
- b. Transmitting appropriate information to the foreign shipper with respect to the character of material he may send, the manner in which it should be packed and how it shall be marked or addressed (see paragraphs 2 to 14 incl.).
- c. Making advance arrangements for meeting all customs requirements upon arrival (see paragraph 15).
- d. Supplying labor, materials, etc. through customs brokers or other agents when called for (see paragraph 18).

What the Foreign Shipper Must Know

2. Only material which the permittee orders and which he knows the permittee is authorized to import under his permit should be included in the shipment or shipments.
3. All material must be plainly labelled as to genus, species, and variety.
4. Size-Age Limitations. Except as provided in this paragraph, all restricted trees and shrubs to be imported shall be limited to the youngest and smallest, normal, clean, and healthy plants which can be successfully freed from soil about their roots, transported to the United States, and established. The inspector may use as a maximum size criterion in enforcing this limitation the normal size of plants no more than two years of age when they have been grown from seeds or cuttings, or having no more than one year's growth after severance from the parent plant when produced by layers or having no more than two seasons growth from the bud or graft when they have been produced by budding or grafting except that the maximum size criterion for rhododendrons (including azalea) or other genera or species of similar slow growth habit shall be the normal size of plants no more than three years of age when they have been grown from seeds or cuttings, or having no more than three years' growth from the bud or graft, or no more than two years' growth after

severance in the case of layers. The size-age limitation shall not apply to naturally dwarf or miniature forms not exceeding 12 inches in height from the soil line nor to artificially dwarfed forms of the character popular in parts of the Orient. Whenever the importer makes a showing with his application for permit, satisfactory to the inspector responsible, that importation of a larger plant, such as, for example, a specimen plant, is necessary, and if in the opinion of the inspector such larger plant may be imported under conditions prescribed in the permit without added risk of pest entry, the inspector may authorize an exception to the limitation of this paragraph and shall specify the exception in the permit.

Herbaceous perennials which are usually imported in the form of root crowns or clumps shall be limited to one-year-old plants produced from single propagating units, or, when consisting of divided clump material, such as Astilbe, to divisions comparable to one-year-old plants produced from single propagating units.

5. Seedlings. Except as provided in this paragraph, only seeds may be imported in the case of forest trees, species of any plants used for understocks and woody ornamental plants that are botanical species or botanical varieties and which grow true from seed. Permits are issued only for varieties which do not come true from seed and must therefore be propagated vegetatively or for seedling material when the applicant can show that it is impossible or impracticable to import viable seed.
6. Freedom from soil. All plant material must be free from sand, soil, and earth. Leaf mold and other decayed vegetable molds are considered as soil. Plants arriving with sand, soil, or earth or packed with approved packing material contaminated with sand, soil, or earth, may be refused entry.
7. Defoliation prior to shipment is required of material from certain subtropical and tropical sources if the material is to clear through an inspection station other than Hoboken. It is the permittee's responsibility to advise the shipper when this is required. See circular Q.37-7.
8. Packing material. Only approved packing material should be used. Leaves, forest litter, woods moss and any similar material taken from or out of the ground and dried grasses, weeds, hays and straws are not approved. Among the commonly used packing materials which are approved are peat moss, sphagnum, coconut or other vegetable fibers freed of pulp, (excluding sugar-cane and cotton fiber), osmunda fiber, excelsior (woodwool), shavings, sawdust, ground cork, buckwheat hulls, vermiculite and charcoal. Willow withes should not be used to tie bundles.
9. Vigorous healthy plants. See discussion on treatments (paragraph 19).
10. Invoices and Certification. Besides the copies of the invoices required by the Customs and those needed by the importer and his agent a copy must accompany the Notice of Arrival filed by the customs broker to meet the requirements of Regulation 11 of Quarantine No. 37. The clearing of shipments will be greatly expedited if, in addition to these the foreign shipper will send a copy by air mail to the inspection station to which the shipment is addressed.

When a packing list accompanies each container of material or a copy of the invoice is enclosed in one of the containers this is not necessary. When each case is not accompanied by a packing list but an invoice to cover all cases accompanies the shipment the invoice should be enclosed in case number 1. Quarantine No. 37 requires that material be appropriately certified by the proper phytopathological officials of the country of origin. (Reg.13, Quar.No.37)

11. Labelling. Lack of labelling delays handling; hence, it is important that plants or bundles of plants be labelled, preferably with scientific names. If the latter are not available a good common name may be used. When only a provincial common name is known its scientific name should be determined from a competent horticultural authority in the vicinity. Plants or bundles of plants may be numbered if a list is submitted with the plants to indicate what the numbers represent.
12. Medium of Importation. The importer may import material by any medium he wishes. Mail importations, whether these be by letter mail, parcel post, air parcel post, and other classes of air mail require no customs broker or bonded carrier to get the material to the inspection station. The same does not apply to importations made through mediums other than the mails. Air express and air freight should not be confused with air importations by mail. Not all countries offer air parcel post; moreover, the character of service rendered may vary with the country. From some countries the parcel moves by air to the United States port of arrival and thence by surface transportation to destination; other countries provide air movement to final destination; still other countries provide both types of air parcel post leaving the shipper to pay for the type selected. Information on whether air parcel post is offered, and, if so, what type is available, can best be obtained from the foreign shipper. Letter rate air mail, sometimes used for seeds, valuable cuttings, etc., when air parcel post and other classes of air mail are not available, carries material through to destination by air. Shipments sent letter rate air mail or first class mail should be marked "This parcel may be opened for inspection." Importers who plan importing by air will find that when air parcel post is not available there will be times when other classes of air mail or even letter rate air mail is as economical as air express in view of the savings of customs broker and bonded carrier fees.

Baggage entries. The importation of most plant material (except certain bulbs and seeds) by baggage may prove more costly than entry by mail because it may be necessary to arrange for a bonded carrier to move the importation from the port of arrival to the nearest inspection station. Upon completion of the plant quarantine handling someone will also have to care for the forwarding of the importation to final destination, and the costs attending such forwarding. For those reasons travelers in foreign countries may wish to consider mailing plants to the United States whenever possible, and thus avoid a number of the entry complications.

13. Addressing mail shipments. When shipments are to be imported by mail, the permittee should first apply to the Import and Permit Unit for a special green and yellow mailing tag or label for each parcel involved. These will be used in accordance with instructions appearing on the reverse side of the tag or label or in accordance with instructions in various foreign languages which, if requested, will be supplied for transmitting to the shipper with the tags or labels. For mail shipments, it is especially important that the permittee instruct his shipper to enclose in each parcel a slip bearing the name, address, and permit number of the permittee.

14. Addressing other than mail shipments. Each case, box, or other container of a shipment shall be clearly and plainly marked to show the general nature and quantity of the contents, the country and locality where grown, bear distinguishing marks, be individually numbered, and be addressed in the following form:

"Collector of Customs

(Name of port where material is authorized to clear quarantine)

For delivery to Plant Quarantine Inspection Station.

For account of

Permit No.

(Name and address of permittee)

From

(Name and address of foreign shipper) ."

#### MEETING CUSTOMS REQUIREMENTS

15. Importers of plant propagating material will bear in mind that such material is in Customs custody at plant quarantine inspection stations and cannot be permitted to go forward until all Customs requirements have been met and the shipment has been released by the Customs. Except in the case of mail shipments valued at less than \$250.00, the meeting of Customs requirements usually necessitates the employment of a customs broker or other agent. Plant Quarantine Inspectors are without authority to attend to Customs requirements or otherwise act as or render the services of customs brokers. Since they are Government employees and in view of the fact that the customs brokerage business is highly competitive, inspectors cannot employ customs brokers on behalf of importer nor should they be requested to recommend such brokers. Inspectors should not be asked to incur expenses on behalf of importers.

#### MAIL SHIPMENTS

16. Since importations by mail arrive in Government custody and remain in Government custody until delivered, no customs broker or bonded carrier need be employed to get the material to the inspection station. After the shipment clears quarantine at the inspection station, it is returned to the mails and goes forward to destination under the original postage. If the value of the shipment is less than \$250.00, duty, if any, is collected at the post office of destination. If the value is \$250.00 or more, the parcel, instead

of going to post office of destination, goes to the Customs port nearest to the post office of destination. Here the importer must either employ a customs broker to make a formal entry and pay the duty or he may bring Customs form 3509 and attend to this himself.

17. Ports of Quarantine Clearance. Material may be offered for plant quarantine clearance at New York, N. Y. (Hoboken, N. J.); Miami, Florida; Brownsville and Laredo, Texas; San Francisco and San Pedro, California; and Seattle, Washington. If your permit does not appear to provide for handling of the importation at the logical point of plant quarantine clearance, application should be made to have it amended. When doing so it should be kept in mind that Regulation 21 of Quarantine No. 37 states that the inspector issuing permits shall be governed by the principle that uninspected and untreated shipments shall not move long distances overland for inspection and treatment but shall be inspected and treated at the authorized point at or nearest the port of arrival. For example, South American material arriving by air clears at Miami. The same material coming by water would enter New York and clear at Hoboken. European and Asiatic material coming via Suez Canal, and African and South American material, by water, clears at Hoboken. Most Mexican material clears at Laredo and trans-Pacific material generally clears at San Francisco or Seattle.

Customs requirements. Numerous delays resulting in loss or deterioration of material result from importers' failure to make arrangements in advance for a customs broker or other agent to attend to customs formalities in connection with air express, express, freight, air freight, or cargo entries.

- A. When the port of arrival is the authorized port of quarantine clearance, the importer should arrange in advance for his customs broker or other agent to take care of all Customs requirements, arrange for a bonded carrier to get the material to the inspection station, arrange for supplying labor and materials if called upon to do so, and instruct his broker or agent with respect to forwarding the material. The customs broker or other agent will need to know the expected time of arrival, the vessel, train or plane on which the material is expected to arrive and should be supplied with invoices or other documents. The inexperienced importer will do well to consult his broker or agent in advance and ascertain what is expected of him.
- B. When shipments will enter where plant quarantine clearance is not authorized, a customs broker or other agent must be employed to arrange for forwarding the material to the authorized inspection station. There are two types of customs entries as follows which the broker may make in order to arrange for this:
- a. Duty paid, including special manifest entries. Under this type of entry the broker pays the duty at the port of first arrival and dispatches the material to the authorized inspection station in bond. After plant quarantine clearance, the customs authorities will release the shipment for forward movement without the

employment of a customs broker. Small shipments can be handled to advantage under this type of entry when it can be arranged.

- b. In-transit (I.T.) entries. Under this type of entry, duty is not paid at the port of first arrival. The customs broker or agent merely makes the I.T. entry which authorizes the shipment to go forward to the authorized inspection station. At the authorized inspection station, the importer must then employ another customs broker who then discharges the duties outlined above in subparagraph A.

## LABOR, SUPPLIES, ETC.

18. Labor costs vary with the size of the shipment and the season of the year. Supplies such as lumber, material for reconditioning, etc., may or may not be necessary depending upon the size and condition of the shipment. Labor may be required to unpack and repack material and to assist inspectors in the movement of cases. Brokers are usually called on for labor in the handling of all large shipments. When a large number of small shipments arrive at one time labor may again be necessary if the shipments are to be handled with dispatch. In such cases the brokers concerned may employ labor and prorate the costs in accordance with the size of the various shipments.

## TREATMENTS

19. It is the purpose of the Plant Quarantine Act to protect the Country against introductions of plant pests and that purpose must receive the Branch's first consideration. To protect the Country and himself against pest introductions, the importer should emphasize to his shipper the necessity of sending clean healthy material. Treatments which are given as a condition of entry are those which, in the light of present knowledge, are deemed most effective for the pest concerned and least likely to cause injury to the plants involved. In those exceptional cases when injury results as a result of treatments given, the importer must regard this as the price of protecting him and other plant growers against pest introductions as all treatments are given entirely at the risk of the importer. In most cases of alleged fumigation injury which have been investigated, the plant material reached the inspection station in a deteriorating condition because of too much or too little moisture, inadequate ventilation, or other adverse factors. When the plants reach the inspection station the injury done to plants as a result of such adverse factors has not always run its course and the injury which subsequently develops is often attributed to fumigation, when, as a matter of fact, the plants may still be undergoing deterioration because of the adverse factors mentioned. It is important to all concerned therefore that vigorous healthy plants be shipped and that they be so packed as not to lose their vitality in transit. Some suggestions on packing material may be had on application to the Import and Permit Unit.

For further information address inquiries to: Import and Permit Unit  
209 River Street  
Hoboken, New Jersey



